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ABSTRACT

Discussed are the issues involved in inservice teacher education, with special emphasis on trends in special education. Such changes as the passage of Public Law 94-142 are reported. Stressed is the need to set new priorities on teacher training at the university level. (SBH)

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INSERVICE AND THE UNIVERSITY: INNOVATION WITHOUT CHANGE?

The inservice training of teachers, traditionally the bastard child of our educational efforts,* is becoming an object of proprietary interest in a number of quarters -- in professional associations, in state education agencies, in colleges and universities, in local school districts, in commercial enterprise, and within the teaching community itself. The growing competition for control of the inservice endeavor underscores a tardy recognition that the effective training of practicing educators is one very critical factor in the success or failure of American education.

"No one, teachers of teachers included, presumes that undergraduate or graduate concentration in education courses is the prime requisite for turning out effective educators. Every evidence is that much, even most, of what makes the able teacher or the able administrator effective he learns on the job by doing it" (Howe, 1973, p. 54). First of all, developing productive human relationships with children, particularly with exceptional children, is not an academic exercise that can be accomplished once and for all during one's college career. Second, while university students must learn a number of techniques, strategies, and methodologies, true competence comes through struggling wisely with the complexities of actual classroom teaching. Field work and internship, which ostensibly help the trainee to develop appropriate skills and attitudes, are of brief duration and often function largely to socialize the student into the teaching role; thus, they could as well be called rites of passage as opportunities for acquiring teaching skills (Friedenberg, 1973).

Third, legislated social and educational changes, notably Public Law 94-142, and the rapidly evolving technology of teaching demand that teachers acquire new competencies if they are to put instructional reform into practice. Fourth, to develop the professionalism called for by emerging multiple roles, the educator must have full opportunity for expansion, experimentation, and leadership.

Finally, whereas private industry concerns itself with personnel training in a quest for cost effectiveness and increased efficiency, public education must be concerned with these and more. We must be concerned with demonstrating child change. Schools, administrators, and teachers are increasingly held accountable for pupil progress. *Thus, the bottom line of inservice training must be translated into an audit trail that leads to demonstrable improvements in service delivery and, hence, to measurable change in children.*

These issues, which have particular implications for special education, are the basis for a gradual deflection of professional attention and federal funding toward solving the problems and meeting the needs presented by inservice training. Take, for example, the direction of funding by the Division of Personnel Preparation of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. For fiscal year 1977-78, the ratio of funds awarded for inservice education, as compared with preservice,

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*Phrase coined by Kenneth R. Howey

is 5:8. The 1978-79 Bureau projection, however, shows a ratio of 7:8 in the underwriting of inservice and preservice programs, respectively.

Funding patterns and professional interest are not essentially directed toward the simple proliferation of programs. On the contary, although as many as a quarter of a million people are currently estimated to be engaged as instructors in some form of inservice activity, this massive effort is rather uniformly judged by the consumer to be a failure (Joyce, Howey, Yarger, Hill, Waterman, Vance, Parker, & Baker, 1976). The problems are legend. Teachers find much of their inservice experience to be irrelevant and impractical. The training is not generally characterized by consistency or continuity. Unified, systematic, and imaginative approaches are rare. Decision-making as to form and content is frequently divorced from actual teacher needs.

The various failures and enigmas may perhaps be summarized into two basic structural problems: "first, the vast varieties of possible training options need to be interfaced closely with teacher needs and general thrusts of school districts. Theory-based approaches to education need to be followed up by clinical training which is largely mediated by teachers themselves. Second, the vast problems of time in which to be trained and providing training close to the work site have obviously not been solved at all (Joyce, et al., 1976, p. 3). *In plain language, neither formal inservice training in the university classroom, nor the one-day gig, will suffice. They never did.*

The professional response to these structural problems has created yet another potential problem -- the fragmentation, rather than the unification, of inservice efforts. There now seem to be questions as to who will achieve a monopoly on control over and responsibility for this training, and these questions appear to stem from issues of territoriality, power, politics, and resistance to change. Participants include state education agencies, local school districts, professional organizations, colleges and universities, each of which has certain resources that can be productive to inservice programming.

State education agencies, for example, have data. Many have records that show levels of training and certification needs of teachers throughout the state, as well as information on districts within the state that are turning out the most successful clients. If a state education agency carves out a controlling role in inservice training, however, it is stepping out of its legislated role. Most state constitutions define to state departments such roles as monitoring, gathering data, administering funds, and mandating certification requirements. The funds appropriated to state departments are intended for stimulation and incentive, not the actual hands-on training of teachers.

Local education agencies also have data in the form of practical understandings of their raw materials and unique problems. Moreover, by staffing inservice programs with their own personnel, they can carry out training on a relatively inexpensive basis. Most important, local school districts have the power to compel teachers to partake of training. On the other hand, school district personnel rarely have the time nor the national perspective necessary to install and implement the most exemplary array of inservice arrangements and expert trainers.

Professional organizations, on the other hand, can muster great forces of

professional know-how, enlist specialists on a nationwide basis and package attractive materials. They are also often in a position to determine, or even dictate, the kinds of training needed and then devise programs, relying on the teacher power of their constituencies. Ultimately lacking, however, are individualization and follow-through and the effort can often be compared to the one-day gig.

The university has long-term training capacities and important research capabilities. Whether or not these can be channeled in ways that will enable the university to become a viable participant in inservice education remains to be seen. It is, however, clear that the university can no longer resist change on the basis of being the sole source of training.

> Until very recently, by far the most pervasive mode of inservice teacher education was the orientation toward acquiring professional credentials. This context is very similar to preservice training in that the teacher is cast as a student of higher education who takes courses and perhaps pursues a degree. However, college courses have little relevance to inservice teacher education. This may be because college-based programs are too often undertaken as an end in themselves and are not related to the specific goals of improving teachers' classroom performance. (Joyce, et al., 1976, p. 16)

The delivery of effective inservice education will depend on the capacity of education agencies, colleges and universities, and professional organizations to collaborate in this area of potentially mutual enterprise. To do so will mean that institutions of higher education will have to make significant changes in their dialogue with community and schools, and in the structures and reinforcement systems of their internal hierarchies. *At the university level, professional rewards issue from research and publishing, presenting and consulting, committee work and administration -- not from training teachers. As one progresses from instructor to assistant professor to associate to full professor, his priorities must change. Thus, those who should be the most highly qualified to make a difference in teacher training in reality do the least of it.* "Unnecessary distinctions in responsibilities have grown up between pre and inservice education, between teaching and training, and between individual renewal and school renewal" (Howey, undated, p. 41). Part of the answer lies in a radically new system of professional reinforcement at the university, a reorienting of priorities that will rest on practical, not political, realities.

> What role have colleges assumed to assist in the arducus task of reforming and redesigning school curricula? How often has their research and experimentation been applied to a specific school problem or priority? How many tenured professors would test their pedagogical skill with students by taking a short-term residency in a school? To what degree can one expect professors to assist in implementing on-site performance-based, job-embedded teacher training? Is that not the college teacher-educator's responsibility? (Howey, undated, p. 41)

It is possible that collaborative, responsive, school-based inservice

training may ensure the universities' long-term survival in the marketplace. It is also possible that, unless university staffs start now to make the fundamental changes, they may lose permanently the opportunity to make significant contributions to the education of practicing teachers.

> Inservice education may well be the most important role of the school of education in the years immediately ahead.....It is thus more important than ever to enhance the quality and reach of inservice training. It must bypass the old road that leads only from credentials to salary increments,and substantively help practitioners become increasingly effective in serving young people. (Howe, 1973, p. 62)

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